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Towyn Urban District Council.



REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1925.

COUNCIL OFFICES,
TOWYN.

TOWYN:
PRINTED BY J. WYNN WILLIAMS, CADVAN HOUSE.

To the Towyn Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary conditions of the Towyn Urban Area for the Year ending 31st December, 1925. This Survey Report has been arranged in accordance with the Circular received from the Ministry of Health.

Natural and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (acres), 24,000.

Population: Census of 1901, total population was 3,744.

„ 1911, „ 3,929.

„ 1921, „ 4,411.

Population in 1925, as adjusted by Registrar General, 3,845.

Number of inhabited houses in 1921, 850.

Number of families or separate occupiers in 1921, 870.

Rateable value, £22,310.

Sum represented by a 1d. rate, £64 15s. od.

The Urban Area comprises the towns of Towyn and Aberdovey, together with the villages of Bryncrug, Rhydyronen and Cwrt (Pennal).

The Area extends from the Dysynni river on the north to the river Dovey on the south, with Cardigan Bay as its western boundary.

Towyn is built on the flat on gravelly soil, with very little shelter from the surrounding hills, which renders it exposed to the breezes and sunshine, with a healthy combination of sea and mountain air, bracing and thoroughly healthy. The land to the north is marshy and artificially drained.

Aberdovey is built on a hill overlooking the estuary of the Dovey. It faces south, and the hill behind screens it from the north and north-east winds, so that it enjoys a mild and even temperature in the winter. The winter climate of the district will compare very favourably with that of Continental health resorts on the Riviera.

Towyn and Aberdovey are well known as seaside resorts, with facilities for bathing, fishing and golfing. A large number of the inhabitants cater for visitors, so that many of the houses are let furnished or apartments are provided during the season.

Fishing is carried on as an industry on a small scale at Aberdovey, and in pre-war days was a convenient port of call for small trading vessels.

There is no staple industry of any importance which has an appreciable effect upon the public health. There is a large agricultural element within the urban area, and the district is well known for sheep and black cattle.

Vital Statistics.

Number of deaths from all causes, 68.

Death rate per 1,000 of population, 17·7.

Infantile mortality rate per 1,000, 166·6.

Number of births registered in the urban area, 42 (27 males, 15 females).

Births : Towyn, 26 ; Aberdovey, 13 ; Rural, 3 ; total, 42.

Birth rate per 1,000 was 10·9. Illegitimate births, 2.

TABLE GIVING BIRTH RATE AND DEATH RATE DURING 1925.

	ANNUAL RATES PER 1,000.		Deaths under 1 year to 1,000 Births.
	Births.	Deaths—all causes.	
England and Wales	18·3	12·2	75
105 County Boroughs and Great Towns	18·8	12·2	79
157 Smaller Towns	18·3	11·2	74
London	18·0	11·7	67
Towyn Urban District	10·9	17·7	95

The Vital Statistics as compared with 1924 show a decrease in births and a slight increase in deaths.

	1922.	1923.	1924.	1925.
Birth Rate ...	10·9	16	14·5	10·9
Death Rate ...	17·4	11·8	17·4	17·7

VITAL STATISTICS TRACED BACK TO 1885.

	1885.	1895.	1905.	1915.	1925.
Birth Rate ...	20·5	25·3	22·6	16·2	10·9
Death Rate ...	17·6	16·6	16·4	14·4	17·7

DEATH RATE.—Although the death rate is high compared with larger towns, we must take into consideration the fact that 42% of the deaths were those of persons over 60 years of age.

Number of deaths between 60 and 70	...	8
“ “ “ 70 and 80	...	12
“ “ “ 80 and 90	...	9

—
29

In addition, one person was accidentally crushed to death.

3 cases committed suicide.

3 cases of drowning while bathing at Aberdovey.

DEATHS.—Towyn, 37 ; Aberdovey, 27 ; Rural, 4 ; total, 68.

Total amount of Poor Law Relief given in 1925 : £694 3s. od.

Total number of persons relieved, including children : 10 men ; 39 women ; 29 children.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

Diphtheria	...	...	1	Heart Disease	...	...	7
Influenza	...	...	1	Arterio Sclerosis	...	...	7
Lung Tuberculosis	...	...	7	Bronchitis	...	...	2
Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	5	Pneumonia	...	...	3
Cancer	...	...	7	Suicides	...	...	3
Diabetes	...	...	1	Cases of Drowning	...	...	3
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	...	...	7	Other causes	...	...	14

General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

A COTTAGE HOSPITAL is provided in the area to deal with medical and surgical cases, X-Ray examinations, and complicated maternity cases. Ten beds and two cots for children are available. It is supported by voluntary subscriptions and endowments. No contribution is provided from the local rates. The situation is ideal as regards sunshine and fresh air.

No Hospital provided for infectious cases.

A Motor Ambulance is provided to convey non-infectious and accident cases to and from the Cottage Hospital.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.—None.

Public Health Officers.—One part-time Medical Officer; one Sanitary Inspector.

Professional Nursing in the Home.—Two District Nurses in the area—1 at Towyn, 1 at Aberdovey—supported by voluntary subscriptions. They visit non-infectious cases at their homes, and undertake maternity cases.

Midwives practising in the area, 3.

Chemical Work undertaken by the Clinical Research, London. Legislation in force :—

Local Acts or Special Local Orders—Nil.

Byelaws relating to the Public Health are in force.

Adoptive Acts.—The Adoptive Acts in force in this district are :

Section 22 of the Public Health Amendment Act, 1890.

Public Health Amendment Act, 1907 :—

Part II., Sections 34 to 38, 44 to 49, 59.

Part III., Section 51.

Part IV., Sections 52 to 59, 62 to 66.

Part V., Part VI., and Sections 92 to 94 of Part X.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.**WATER SUPPLY.**

TOWYN.—The source of the Towyn water supply is situated about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the town, a small filter bed and reservoir situated on Braichyrhiw farm, Rhydyronen. The reservoir is too small and will only hold sufficient for one day's supply, with the result that frequently the pressure of water is so low in the main pipe that many houses and public buildings are constantly without suit-

cient water for domestic purposes. I strongly recommend the Council to build a larger reservoir at Nantybela, situated 600 feet above sea level. This water is pure and abundant. If this scheme were undertaken, it would obviate the necessity of turning water from the river to augment our supply during the summer months. The river water is open to contamination, and sheep dipping takes place near the source of this supply twice a year.

ABERDOVEY.—Gathering-ground situated at Bwlchgwyn Farm, about a mile above the town. The supply is pure but inadequate for the present need. A scheme to get water from Nantygwenlli is under consideration. This water is pure and abundant and sufficient at all times of the year.

BRYNCRUG.—This village is supplied by pumps which need constant attention. The surface of the wells requires re-flagging, and the well should be built up on the side nearest the Fathew stream to prevent pollution after heavy rains. A large number of the inhabitants have to be satisfied with water from the brook, which is often contaminated with filth of every description. The only remedy is to connect the village with the Towyn supply.

CWRT, NEAR PENNAL.—This village is now supplied with a good water supply. The source is situated a few yards above the village on high ground, and is conveyed to stand-pipes outside the houses.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

TOWYN.—The sewerage is "water carriage" and empties into the sea. The outlet on the sea-shore is almost blocked up and requires immediate attention. The sewers are efficiently flushed with volumes of water. It is a byelaw of the Council that all water closets should be supplied with a separate cistern or flushing box of adequate capacity. I regret to state that many of these have no such arrangements and are therefore very unsatisfactory. I wish to impress upon the Council the importance of taking this work in hand. I wish to draw the attention of the Council to the insanitary condition of the houses at Cambrian Terrace, but so far no action has been taken. It is important for these to be connected with the main sewer with as little delay as possible.

A public urinal is urgently required near the Cattle Market.

ABERDOVEY.—The sewerage is water carriage and empties into the Dovey. The sewers are efficiently flushed. Most of the water closets are connected with the main sewer and provided with separate flushing boxes.

BRYNCRUG VILLAGE.—No sewerage system; no public scavenging, and no uniform system of dealing with excreta. The pail type of closet is primitive and crude.

CWRT, NEAR PENNAL.—There is no uniform system of dealing with sewage in this locality. The excreta from some of the closets find their way into the brook adjoining.

Closet Accommodation :

- Number of water closets constructed during the year, 5.
- Number of new pail closets, 3.
- No. of pail closets connected to water closets, 2.
- No. of pail closets in the district, 230.
- No. of water closets in the district, 740.
- No. of privy middens, nil.

Scavenging.—The removal of house refuse at Towyn and Aberdovey is done by a public scavenger twice a week. The ashes are placed in boxes or ashbins and they are emptied into the Council's cart and removed some distance to a tip. It would be very satisfactory if all tenements had proper ashbins with covers to replace some of the derelict boxes found outside the buildings. The scavenging carts now have covers. The streets are scavenged regularly and watered in the summer.

Sanitary Inspection of District.—A number of farms and other dwellings in the Rural Ward have been inspected. Some were found defective and the owners served with notices.

Number of visits made by the Inspector of Nuisances :—

To water closets ...	30	To cowsheds ...	35
To slaughter houses ...	20	To pigstyes ...	45
To dairies ...	30	To infectious cases ...	18

Number and nature of notices served during the year :—

	Informal.	Statutory.	Result.
Structural defects of houses	10	3	3 complied
Overcrowding	—	2	2 „
Uncleanliness	9	—	complied
Defective water fittings	—	7	„
Letters issued <i>re</i> non-compliance of notices	16		
Smoke abatement : no action taken.			
Offensive trades : nil.			

There are no common lodging-houses in the district and no cellar dwellings.

Schools.—There are 6 Public Elementary Schools in the district. The sanitary condition of these is satisfactory. The water supply of Towyn and Aberdovey Schools comes from the public supply. Bryn-crug and Pennal Schools are supplied by pumps.

Closure of Schools.—None of the Elementary Schools in the district were closed during the year on account of infectious diseases. These Schools are under the supervision of the County Medical Officer of Health.

Dog Nuisance.—The number of dogs kept in the area is increasing at an alarming rate. They are becoming a nuisance and a danger to public health. The great majority are mangy mongrels and live in the kitchen, contaminating food and spreading worms

and insects among children. Dogs deserve better attention and should not be allowed to live where food is prepared and consumed.

Housing.

I.—General Housing conditions in the Area :

(a) Good.

(b) Shortage of houses for the working classes. Six houses built suitable for workmen's dwellings (private contract).

II.—Overcrowding :

Two cases of overcrowding reported due to lack of houses.

Notices served and some accommodated elsewhere.

III.—Fitness of Houses :

(a) General standard good.

(b) Defective roofing, dampness and lack of ventilation.

(c) Owners not prepared to remedy defects ; would prefer closure.

IV.—No unhealthy areas.

HOUSING STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1925.

No. of new houses erected during the year—

(a) Total 5.

(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts—

1. By the Local Authority, 2.

I.—Unfit Dwelling Houses :

(1) No. of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects ... 10

(2) No. of dwellings inspected and recorded under the Housing Regulations ... 16

(3) No. of dwelling-houses unfit for human habitation ... 0

(4) No. of dwelling-houses not reasonably fit ... 2

II.—Remedy of defects without service of formal Notices :

No. of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority ... 16

III.—Action under Statutory Powers :

(A) Proceedings under Section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925—

(1) No. of dwelling-houses in respect of which Notices were served requiring repairs ... 0

(2) No. of dwelling-houses rendered fit after service of formal Notices :—

(i) By owners ... 0

(ii) By Local Authority in default of owners ... 0

(3) No. of dwelling-houses where closing orders became operative ... 0

(B) Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

(i) No. of dwelling-houses receiving Notices for remedy of defects ... 10

(ii) No. of dwelling-houses remedied after formal Notices—

(a) By owners ... —

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ... —

(C) Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925 :

(1) No. of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders ... —

(2) No. of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... —

(3) No. of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit	...	...	...	...	—
(4) No. of dwellings in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	...	...	...	...	—
(5) No. of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	...	...	...	...	—

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Milk Supply.—Wholesome and of good quality in many cases, indifferent in some cases. The dairies and cowsheds are regularly visited by the Inspector. They are limewashed, but some are still unsatisfactory. The following “golden rules” should be enforced in order to secure a pure milk supply :—

1. The cows' teats thoroughly cleansed with warm water before milking.
2. Washable overalls to be worn by all milkers.
3. Personal cleanliness of milkers, especially the hands.
4. Milk strained with greater care and vessel immediately covered with lid to prevent access of dust.
5. Milking sheds to be free from dust and manure.
6. Conveyance of milk in vessel with proper tap.
7. Approaches to cowsheds to be free of manure.
8. Milk cans should be immediately rinsed out with cold water and afterwards scalded with boiling water or steam.
9. Milk cart to be scrupulously clean.

(i) No action taken with regard to tuberculous milk and tuberculous cattle.

(ii) Licences Order, 1923 : Nil.

(iii) Nil.

(iv) Nil.

Meat Inspection.—Nil.

Slaughter Houses.—No public abattoir. Premises licensed for slaughter are visited by the Inspector periodically. No special arrangement for inspection of meat.

Bakehouses.—There are 7 in the district. Some of them are out of date and very unsatisfactory.

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

Measles.—This is not a Notifiable Disease in this area.

Scarlet Fever.—Three cases notified during the year.

Diphtheria.—Two cases reported, both treated with antitoxin.

Malaria.—Nil.

Bacteriological Work.—Four throat swabs sent to Clinical Research for examination for diphtheric bacillus. Two were positive.

Disinfection.—This is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector. Formalin spray and sulphur used. Clothing is treated by the Sack Disinfectant when necessary.

Influenza.—A few mild cases. No epidemic.

Carrier Cases.—Nil.

Dysentery.—Nil.

Tuberculosis.—Seven cases notified, 4 Pulmonary and 3 other forms. These cases are notified by the medical men of the district as soon as discovered and are reported to the Tuberculosis Officer of the County. It is difficult to persuade early cases to avail themselves of Sanatorium treatment.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.—Nil.

Disease.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total deaths.
Small Pox	Nil	Nil	Nil
Scarlet Fever	3	„	Nil
Diphtheria	2	„	1
Enteric Fever	Nil	„	Nil
Puerperal Fever	1	„	1
Pneumonia	3	„	3

There is no Isolation Hospital to deal with infectious cases.

TUBERCULOSIS.—A Tuberculosis Physician resides in the County appointed by the Welsh National Memorial. All cases are reported to the Officer, who decides the line of treatment at a Sanatorium or Tuberculosis Hospital. A few beds are available at the Hospital just outside the area. This Officer has visiting stations at Towyn and Aberdovey, and patients are examined at regular intervals. There is no after-care Committee. A few shelters are available for isolating suitable cases at their own homes. A great many tubercular cases in this area have contracted the Disease elsewhere and return home for treatment.

Particulars of new cases of Tuberculosis and of deaths from the disease in the area during 1925 :—

AGE PERIODS.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
20	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...
25	...	1	...	1	1	...	...	...
35	1	...	...	...	...	2	1	...
45	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
55	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
65 and upwards	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTALS	...	2	2	1	2	3	2	...

VENEREAL DISEASE.—There is no scheme adopted by the Council. Any case reported to the County Medical Officer of Health can be admitted to Bangor Hospital.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.—There is no Centre in the district.

SHIPPING.—None from foreign ports.

(Signed) J. A. DAVIES,
Medical Officer of Health.

Council Offices, Towyn,
7th July, 1926.

